

**TOWN OF NEWFIELDS SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

At 6:27 pm, The Select Board, by motion of Select Board Member Sununu, seconded by Select Board Member Harmon and in accordance with RSA91-A:3, to enter into a non-public session for purpose of property matter [RSA91-A3(II)(e)]. By roll call vote the Board passed the motion: Harmon-Affirmative; Kessler-Affirmative; Sununu-Affirmative

A motion to leave non-public session was made Select Board Member Sununu and seconded by Select Board Member Harmon. The motion was passed and at 6:41 a public session reconvened.

Select Board Present: Chairman Michael Sununu, Hoby Harmon & Mike Kessler

Others Include: Win Fream, Jack Parnham, Sue McKinnon, Brian Knipstein, Debbie & Raymond Pawlencio & Police Chief Young

Call to order at 7:00 pm.

The Select Board reviewed and approved the following items:

Checks Dated	11/29/23:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$799.00
School Tax	11/30/23:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$271,500.70

Road Agent Budget

The Road Agent, Brian Knipstein, presented his \$420,600 budget to the Board. He increased the paving budget by \$80k so that he can complete Old Lee Road (5,900 ft.) all at once. The road will be reclaimed and paved in 2024. He reminded the Select Board that the Town is behind in paving for all the developments - Scanlon, Heath, Deertrees etc. There has not been an increase in the budget since 2019. In 2025, he would like to pave Bassett Lane. He asked for an update regarding Pleasant and Summer Streets. The Board informed him that the town is still waiting for grant money for those streets. Bill Meserve just finalized the RFP for the engineering and the Town should have more information in January. Summer Street is 600ft. and Pleasant Street is 1,730ft. but Brian will only be paving to Swamscott Rd. The current cost is approximately \$40 a foot for paving and reclaiming.

Brian asked about the \$40k Highway Block Grant and whether it is in addition to his budget. He would like to encumber the funds so that he does not lose them. Michael told him it needs to be under contract. The Board can enter into a contract with Brian to encumber the funds if Brian gets it to the Board before the end of the year. Brian added that Bassett Road will cost around \$180k. Michael said he expects the paving budget will be around \$200k each year.

Michael asked Brian if he had a chance to look at the Hilton Field for the ice-skating rink. Brian will level it with some topsoil and then reseed in the Spring.

Win asked Brian for the name of a tree removal service to remove a tree at the Town Landing.

Library Budget

Win presented his adjusted \$76,348 budget to the Board. They discussed the Library's asbestos abatement project. Win will submit the \$8k abatement contract to the Board for signatures in anticipation that the work will be completed next year. The funds will be encumbered. The Library budget includes a children's librarian for 8hrs a week. They removed the staff training expense but left in the consultant to mentor Brittney in her new position. This brings it to a 5% increase over last year. Win and Michael discussed the groundskeeping expense and whether to move it to the general groundskeeping/maintenance fund under the Town Office Budget. Win praised Cathy Devine who cleans the Library and mentioned his deep appreciation for the Friends of the Library for their donations.

Town Office Budget

Sue McKinnon presented her Executive budget to the Board. It is a 4.5% increase over last year. This includes salaries, insurance, and retirement. She put in a modest increase for herself so that she may increase the salaries of the Deputy Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant to reflect salaries more in line with other towns. They are still at the lower end of the range according to the NH Municipal survey. Sue then discussed each of the line items with the Board. The main accounts include planning, zoning, general repairs & maintenance, advertising, dues, vital statistics, elections (4), financial administration which includes the Treasurer salary, annual audit, legal expenses, and Tyler Tech maintenance contract. The bond principal and interest payment will be \$66,800.

Michael asked the Board to be prepared to discuss the following items at the next meeting: mosquito spraying, welfare & charitable contributions. Currently, mosquito spraying has been removed from the budget. The total operating costs have increased 8% from last year.

Michael said one place to save \$50k is to remove curbside recycling. This is a savings of 25% of total municipal waste. The Town had a contract with Newmarket which allowed residents to take their recycling to their transfer station. Coupons can currently be purchased at the Town Office for glass. Michael does not know where else to find money in the budget unless they make cuts to the fire station or police which would affect coverage. The Town is paying a lot of money for recycling when the NY Times has stated only 8% of plastic gets recycled, paper is no longer being recycled. The only thing getting recycled is metal.

A resident added her opinion that people are recycling plastic that is not 1,2 or 5's. If items are not sorted correctly, it all gets pushed to a waste area.

Michael said yes, this is a problem everywhere. This Town spends a lot of money on recycling when most people are not going to sort their recycling. It would be great if it was all being recycled but it is not. And because it is not, it costs the Town a lot and we will never be reimbursed

by recycling. Years ago, we would get money back for recycling but there are no longer entities or countries willing to take it.

Hoby asked to keep the welfare at \$4k since most of it has already been issued this year. The Board agreed.

Michael added that there will be a fire truck/capital equipment warrant articles for a total of \$52k, the Rugg property warrant article for \$3.5 million and possibly the Hilton House for \$575k.

Michael informed the Board that his conversation with DRA affirmed that a warrant article can be added for the purchase of the fire truck in the form of a lasting amount indicated in the warrant article. For example, "raise \$200k to be spent over the next four years to purchase a fire truck." The Board are agents of the funds so it will not require a warrant article to access the reserved funds. The anticipation is to continue to do \$50k warrant articles for the next two years to bring the reserve balance up to \$600k and this year's \$200k warrant article would be paid whenever they take delivery of the fire truck.

Assessing Bid

The Board only received one Assessing bid from the Town's current Assessor, Rodney Wood & Associates. His \$16,800 bid is for five years and is the same amount as last year. Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to accept the bid. All were in favor and the motion carried.

29 Runaway Road

The Board addressed 29 Runaway Rd. The property owner cut trees within the wetlands on his property and built a bridge over the river. Hoby spoke with Mike Cuomo from the Rockingham County Conservation Commission and the Town Planner, Glenn Greenwood, about the cutback & soil issues. Hoby said the situation is within the Town ordinances. The Board reviewed Hoby's letter that he would like to send to the resident. Although the letter asks permission from the homeowner to join Hoby, Mike, and Glenn in a walk-through of the property, it is not required as indicated by the ordinance. Mike Cuomo informed Hoby of two other similar situations that occurred in the past.

Michael mentioned the references in the letter refer to the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act, State Statue 483.b. Normally, this would fall under Department of Environmental Services but the language in our Town ordinances allows the Town Select Board to act as enforcement. This allows the Board to fine, mediate and enforce the ordinance. He added this State statute specifically mentions the Piscassic River and building in the buffer zones.

Hoby motioned, seconded by Michael, to send the revised letter to the resident. All were in favor and the motion carried. Hoby added that if the owner chooses not to meet with them – Hoby, Mike Cuomo, and Glenn, then they will notify him that they will be walking the property regardless and set a date and time. They will provide a two-week response time.

Signage

The Board had a follow-up discussion on the signage complaint. The letter addressed an ordinance pertaining to permanent signage. The temporary sandwich boards at the church and Swamscott Bottling are well within their property lines so no further action was required.

Noise Complaint

Michael did not have a chance to review the letter regarding Vernon Family Farm (VFF) and 381 Piscassic Rd. and would like to discuss it at a later meeting. Hoby said that he did a review of the noise data from VFF. The farm had 67 incidences exceeding 65 decibels.

Police Detail Fund

Hoby asked about the Police Detail fund. Since it will have approximately \$150k by the end of year and a police cruiser only costs \$70k, could they use some of the funds for other necessities? Michael said the fund was set up specifically for purchasing police cruisers. A warrant article would need to be written and voted on by the Town to change the fund's purpose. Hoby will draft a warrant article.

Email

Michael confirmed that there are funds remaining in the current budget to move forward with the new email system. Micheal asked Police Chief Young to obtain the upfront costs for this year and to determine next year's costs so they may be added to the budget. A contract will be needed to encumber funds for next year.

Mike K. asked Michael again about Town Officials using personal emails. Michael replied that it is up to the individual. If Town employees/officials would like a Town email, it can be set up.

Town Hall Audio

Michael told Mike and Hoby to determine what they would need to spend for the audio/streaming service, and it will need to be added to the budget.

Holiday Celebration

This year's Holiday Celebration will be on December 3rd from 3:00pm – 6:00pm. Michael extended his thanks to everyone who decorated the Town Hall and said that he will be attending the Celebration.

Police Department PTO Carryover

The current PTO policy allows ten days to be carried over at the end of each year. Police Chief Young asked the Board for permission to carry over additional PTO for himself and some other officers. The Board gave permission but asked not to have this situation occur next year or else the Board would be forced to provide PTO that expires. Police Chief Young agreed.

Next Meeting Dates

The Board agreed to the following upcoming dates:
December 12th and 18th

At 8:30pm, Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Therrien